

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, January 8, 2015**

**Notes from Commissioner Wagner**

1. [Commissioner's Commentary](#): A Conversation about Rhode Island Education
2. Newest District Teacher of the Year blog post focuses on [STEM to STEAM](#) and art education
3. Rhode Island ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the country on Education Week [Quality Counts](#) 2016 report
4. RIDE prepares summary of issues before [Funding Formula](#) Working Group, group to meet **Monday** (January 11)

**From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE)**

***Standards:***

5. RIDE offers scholarships for educators to attend Winter Standards Institute on [Common Core](#), **January 22** deadline

***Health and Safety:***

6. Principals to receive 2016 [School Health Profiles](#) surveys; must be completed and returned by **March 7– Action Item**

***Data Quality and Collections:***

7. RIDE urges diligence in [ensuring data quality](#)

8. LEAs asked to submit [student-contact data](#)
9. RIDE distributes, posts resources on PARCC [student-data collection](#)
10. *Reminder:* Several [data collections](#) open, due this month, next

***Assessments:***

11. PARCC seeks feedback from parents, teachers on [score-release](#) process
12. RIDE schedules workshops for administrators on [PARCC accommodations](#), accessibility

***Instruction:***

13. RIDE to hold webinars for schools, others interested in providing coursework through [Advanced Coursework Network](#)

**From the U.S. Department of Education**

14. Duncan, King send letter on fostering safe, respectful, non-discriminatory [learning environments](#)
15. Acting [Education Secretary King](#) writes introductory blog post

**From other organizations**

16. Conference on [financial capability](#) scheduled for **January 23** at RIC
  17. Conference scheduled for **January 21** on federal requirements regarding [EDGAR and IDEA](#)
  18. Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to accept applications for [Young Scholars Program](#)
  19. Boghossian Memorial Trust offers [college scholarships](#)
  20. Forensic Outreach announces [STEAM](#) competition for students
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### **Action Item Calendar**

**Thursday** (January 14): [Student Contacts Reporting](#)

February 3: [Textbook Data Collection](#)

March 7: School Health Profiles due (see [below](#))

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### **Notes from Commissioner Wagner**

- 1. Commissioner's Commentary: A Conversation about Rhode Island Education**

As you may know, I spoke to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education on Wednesday about bringing trust and joy back into our schools while dramatically improving teaching and learning for all students. My remarks were built upon conversations I have had over the past several weeks with you and with other education stakeholders – and on the feedback we have received from these conversations. I have submitted a “commentary” essay to the Providence Journal, which summarizes some of the ideas and proposals I presented to the Council. Here is an excerpt from the commentary:

Teaching is the engine that powers great schools. Great instruction happens when we provide teachers with time to collaborate, develop curriculum and lessons, review student work, observe one another, and reflect on their practice. We must recruit, support, and retain a diverse staff of teachers and principals into our professional community.

But what if we did even more? What if we also re-imagined how we do schooling? What if we truly empowered the teachers, students, families, and principals who lead a school community? And what if we made these activities voluntary at the school level? Innovation and coercion do not go hand in hand.

Although it is our mission to prepare students for the 21st century, the way we do schooling was largely designed in the 19th century. The way most schools divide up time, knowledge, and learning just doesn’t make sense for many students – or for their teachers. Why not change that? Why not re-imagine schooling through hands-on, integrated, project- and problem-based approaches?

We know that far too many of our students do not have access to or are not prepared for advanced learning experiences in high school. There is some good work under way, such as Governor Raimondo's Prepare Rhode Island and P-TECH initiatives – and we need to continue expanding opportunities. Persisting in challenging coursework is one of the best ways for our students to develop the social and emotional skills – the so-called “essential skills” – they will need for success in life. Let's prepare our children for their futures, starting with early childhood fluency with words and numbers through a deep and engaging high-school course of study.

We need grade-level standards to ensure equity of access to the teaching and learning that prepares students for success in life, but these standards need not stifle innovation. We need tests that measure student progress so we know where our students stand, but these tests need not produce worry and fear. Assessment serves instruction – not the other way around – and the primary purpose of a test should be to provide the feedback that prompts a culture of constant growth.

Teachers, students, families, and principals would need additional autonomy and support to implement this kind of vision. What can we do to dramatically empower our school communities?

What if principals and their teacher leadership teams had the autonomy and authority to design and implement a school's instructional program, including authority over budget and hiring decisions and freedom from the state and

local rules and regulations that seem to constrict rather than enhance education? We would need shared leadership among a school's principal and teachers, with the support of superintendents and school committees, anchored in partnerships with students and their families.

If we are serious about innovation and empowerment, why couldn't we allow students to enroll in another district if the district had the space and wanted to welcome more students? One size doesn't fit all. If we could provide opportunities for true autonomy, all schools would have the power to create learning environments that are so compelling no one would want to leave, even if they could.

These ideas are not new. For the past 20 years, Massachusetts has taken a similar approach, focusing on high standards and school empowerment. These are long-standing features present in all high-achieving organizations, not just in education. These are the ideas that could make our state and our economy strong.

Let's create that culture of school leadership, feedback, innovation, and continuous improvement. If we give them the opportunity, I believe our teachers and students will achieve even more than we thought possible.

## **2. Newest District Teacher of the Year blog post focuses on STEM to STEAM and art education**

The second entry in our District Teacher of the Year blog is posted on our website. See the "featured educator" space on our [home page](#) for a link to Exeter-West Greenwich District Teacher of the year Sharon LaFrenaye's post on STEM to STEAM: Art education

as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. For a direct link to the blog, go to:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorRecognition/DistrictTeacherOfTheYear.aspx#DTOYblog>

### **3. Rhode Island ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the country on Education Week Quality Counts 2016 report**

Yesterday Education Week released its annual report on the states, Quality Counts. The report shows our rankings are up slightly from last year's rankings. Our overall grade this year was a C+, for a ranking of 13<sup>th</sup> in the country. (As in previous years, no state received an A; Massachusetts ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, with a B+.) Our overall grade and ranking are unchanged since last year, but our ranking is up dramatically since 2011, when we ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the country.

We improved slightly in all three of the sub-reports. We are 5<sup>th</sup> in the country in finance (based on equity and per-pupil expenditures), 22<sup>nd</sup> in the country in "chance for success" (based on NAEP scores, family income and education level, and pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollment), and 23<sup>rd</sup> in the country on K-12 Achievement (based on NAEP and AP results and graduation rates).

Quality Counts this year includes a special report on "Poverty Disparity," which is the gap in NAEP scores between economically disadvantaged students and other students. Rhode Island ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in the country (with 1<sup>st</sup> being the narrowest gap), but 4<sup>th</sup> in New England, ahead of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

#### **4. RIDE prepares summary of issues before Funding Formula Working Group, group to meet Monday (January 11)**

Based on meeting materials, public comment, and discussions of the Funding Formula Working Group over the course of its initial six meetings, the staff at RIDE has drafted a set of initial recommendations for the group to consider and discuss at its meeting on **Monday** (January 11). These are not RIDE recommendations to the group; rather, they represent the best effort of the RIDE staff to summarize the work of the group to date. We have posted the initial recommendations here:

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Funding-and-Finance-Wise-Investments/Funding-Sources/State-Education-Aid-Funding-Formula/FundingFormulaWorkingGroup/Mtg7-Issue\\_recommendations\\_issued\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Funding-and-Finance-Wise-Investments/Funding-Sources/State-Education-Aid-Funding-Formula/FundingFormulaWorkingGroup/Mtg7-Issue_recommendations_issued_DRAFT.pdf)

The meeting will take place from 5 to 7:30 p.m., Rhode Island College (Student Union Ballroom), 600 Mount Pleasant Ave., Providence.

**From RIDE**

#### ***Standards:***

#### **5. RIDE offers scholarships for educators to attend Winter Standards Institute on Common Core, January 22 deadline**

The Achievement Network will be offering a Winter Standards Institute on the Common Core standards February 17 through the 20. The institute is an opportunity for a community of practitioners to think deeply about their work, get smarter about



research and materials, and confront the challenges of meeting high standards with all students. The institute will provide intensive, content-based learning experiences for teachers and leaders in multiple grade bands in one of three pathways: mathematics, English Language Arts/literacy, and Leadership.

We are offering scholarships to cover the registration costs, (\$1,600) for approximately 25 educators to attend. LEAs and educators will be responsible for travel and lodging costs associated for the travel to Boston. The address, [www.standardsinstitutes.org](http://www.standardsinstitutes.org) will connect you with more information on this institute to help inform your decision to participate.

The short application will require quick turnaround so that we can make decisions in time for you to register by February 12. We will prioritize providing scholarships to those educators who are prepared to share the learning and lead instruction within their school or district. Please complete the [Winter Standards Institute Scholarship Application](#) and return it no later than **January 22** to [melissa.cabralbraga@ride.ri.gov](mailto:melissa.cabralbraga@ride.ri.gov). Successful applicants will be notified no later than January 29.

Contact Phyllis Lynch ([phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov](mailto:phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov)) or Mary Ann Snider ([maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov](mailto:maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov)) if you have any questions about the institute or the scholarship.

### ***Health and Safety:***

#### **6. Principals to receive 2016 School Health Profiles surveys; must be completed and returned by March 7– *Action Item***

Along with the Department of Health, through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

RIDE will administer the 2016 School Health Profiles (Profiles). Profiles surveys are conducted every two years among principals and lead health-education teachers to assess the status of school health policies and programs at the middle- and high-school levels. Survey packets will be mailed to principals within the next several weeks and will need to be completed and returned to RIDE by Friday, **March 7**. If you have questions regarding the administration of the surveys, please contact Midge Sabatini, at [Midge.Sabatini@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Midge.Sabatini@ride.ri.gov), or Jasmine Rezendes, at [Jasmine.Rezendes@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Jasmine.Rezendes@ride.ri.gov).

### ***Data Quality and Collections:***

#### **7. RIDE urges diligence in ensuring data quality**

Federal, state, and interagency reporting increasingly rely on educational data. The educational data that districts submit to RIDE are the foundation of this important information we compile. We organize the data to create relevant and meaningful information that are distributed through government reporting, RIDE systems, and back to you. This information is expected to be timely, accurate, and of high quality.

Please be diligent regarding data quality as we go forward in 2016.

#### **8. LEAs asked to submit student-contact data**

Each school year, we request that LEAs submit and maintain their student-contact information. RIDE collects student-contact data to survey students with disabilities. We also use the data in order to communicate important information to students and families. Student Contact includes data regarding how to contact students

and their guardians. The data set includes mailing address, email address, and phone numbers for a student as well as primary and secondary contacts.

Student-contact data can be submitted through [eRIDE](#) using the Enrollment Census application or through the Automated Data Transfer agent. Student Contact is a submission type within the Enrollment Census application.

The LEA-level Student Contact report under Report Types will need to be signed by the superintendent or head of LEA, then scanned and emailed to [erideInternal@ride.ri.gov](mailto:erideInternal@ride.ri.gov).

If you have any questions about the Student Contact collection or report, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at:

<https://support.ride.ri.gov/tickets/new>.

## **9. RIDE distributes, posts resources on PARCC student-data collection**

The names of students and their 2016 PARCC tests have been loaded to the [Pearson Access Next live \(Production\) site](#). LEAs will need to maintain student-registration data within Pearson Access Next, along with submitting students' Personal Needs data and detailed testing data. To facilitate this effort, a Quick Start Guide, Student Maintenance, Data Checklist, and Timeline documentation have been distributed to data managers and posted under "resources" in the PARCC Technology community within the Instructional Support System.

## **10. *Reminder: Several data collections open, due this month, next***

The following are the data-collection deadlines for January and February:

- January 14: [Student Contacts Reporting](#)
- February 3: [Textbook Data Collection](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

### ***Assessments:***

#### **11. PARCC seeks feedback from parents, teachers on score-release process**

Individual PARCC score reports for the spring 2015 assessments have been released in most PARCC states, and the PARCC consortium wants to hear from parents and teachers on what went well and what can be improved. Parents whose child has received a score report can fill out this [survey](#). Educators whose students took PARCC assessments in the previous school year can fill out this [survey](#). Your opinions will provide valuable feedback that will be used to make the next score-release process even better.

#### **12. RIDE schedules workshops for administrators on PARCC accommodations, accessibility**

RIDE is offering workshops for district and school administrators on the PARCC accommodations and accessibility features. The workshops will cover selecting appropriate accommodations for

students and preparing for test day. Those attending the workshops should bring, or have available electronically, a copy of the 4th edition of the PARCC Accommodation and Accessibility Features Manual found here:

<http://parconline.org/assessments/accessibility>.

January 28:

Northern Rhode Island Collaborative

9 - 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 - 3 p.m.

Registration:

<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1407>

February 1:

Northern Rhode Island Collaborative

9 - 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 - 3 p.m.

Registration:

<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1406>

February 4:

North Kingstown School Department

8:30 - 11 a.m.

Registration:

<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1407>

***Instruction:***

- 13. RIDE to hold webinars for schools, others interested in providing coursework through Advanced Coursework Network**

RIDE would like to invite middle and high schools to apply to be a Network Provider for the new Rhode Island Advanced Coursework Network. The Advanced Coursework Network is designed to help districts and schools create opportunities for Rhode Island students to envision, pursue, and complete their individualized graduation pathway by expanding on the great work of Rhode Island schools, districts, community organizations, and postsecondary-education institutions and by creating opportunities to further sustain existing efforts.

As a Network Provider, you will open doors and create new opportunities for Rhode Island middle- and high-school students by offering previously unavailable coursework to students across the state. Network Providers will offer coursework including advanced science and mathematics courses, as well as Advanced Placement (AP<sup>®</sup>), world languages, career-focused and dual- or concurrent-enrollment courses. As a Network Provider, you may choose to extend coursework already offered by your school or organization or to develop new course opportunities. Coursework may be face-to-face, blended or virtual, and could be offered during the traditional school day or after hours or on weekends. RIDE will pay a per-student tuition to Network Providers for each student they enroll from the Network based on the proposed tuition in each Network Provider's application process.

Applications are due via email by **February 1**. To review the Request for Proposals and additional resources for potential Network Providers, please visit:

[WWW.RIDE.RI.GOV/ADVANCEDCOURSEWORK](http://WWW.RIDE.RI.GOV/ADVANCEDCOURSEWORK).

Join us for a webinar to learn more:

- Thursday (January 14) @ 10 a.m. [Register](#)
- January 19 @ 3:30 p.m. [Register](#)
- January 20 @ 2 p.m. [Register](#)
- January 22 @ 11 a.m. [Register](#)

We hope that you will consider applying to offer coursework in the next school year. Information is also available on our website regarding becoming a Network Member, in which students at your school or district may choose to take courses offered by the Network. Inquiries regarding the Network can be directed to Steve Osborn, Chief, Division of Accelerating School Performance, at [Stephen.Osborn@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Stephen.Osborn@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8485.

### **From the U.S. Department of Education**

#### **14. Duncan, King send letter on fostering safe, respectful, non-discriminatory learning environments**

Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Acting Secretary of Education John King have written a “Dear Colleagues” letter that encourages school district and college and university leaders to foster safe, respectful, and non-discriminatory learning environments for their students. The letter includes a list of resources to help promote more positive school climates. You can read the letter here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/151231.html>

#### **15. Acting Education Secretary King writes introductory blog post**

Acting Education Secretary John King hit the ground running this week, revisiting his elementary school in Brooklyn, [greeting students and teachers](#) at JoAnn Leleck Elementary School at Broad Acres in Silver Spring, Maryland (part of the same school district where his children attend school), and hosting a meeting with teachers active on social media.

He also penned an [introductory blog post](#), with an [embedded video](#) and outlining [three resolutions](#) for 2016:

- working to ensure every student in America – regardless of zip code or background – has the opportunities of a high-quality education;
- supporting the nation’s educators and elevating the teaching profession; and
- improving access, affordability, and completion in higher education for all students.

### **From other organizations**

#### **16. Conference on financial capability scheduled for January 23 at RIC**

The 2016 Rhode Island Financial Capability Conference will be held on Saturday, **January 23**, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Rhode Island College, Alger Hall. This conference is open to all teachers, social-service providers, librarians, parents, and adults who are interested in learning more about personal finance. Interactive workshops, exhibits, and panel sessions will feature teaching ideas and resources that are aligned with national financial literacy standards [endorsed by R.I. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education in November 2014](#). This event is being organized by the Rhode Island Jump\$tart Coalition and the Rhode



Island Council for Economic Education. The previous [2014 RI Financial Capability Conference](#) was highly successful, attracting more than 200 participants. Please share this free financial literacy professional development opportunity with other administrators and teachers in your school or district. For more information and the conference registration link, see:

<https://2016financialcapabilityconference.eventbrite.com/>

**17. Conference scheduled for January 21 on federal requirements regarding EDGAR and IDEA**

The Association of Rhode Island Administrators of Special Education would like to invite all superintendents and business directors to attend the Legal Conference. The Legal Conference is being co-sponsored by RIDE in support of this year's keynote speaker, Tiffany Winters, Esq. She will present on EDGAR and IDEA and meeting new federal rules. We are inviting superintendents and business directors to join their special-education directors to the keynote so that as a district team you can plan how you will ensure that grant expenditures meet new federal rules.

The annual Legal Conference will be held at the Sheraton Airport Hotel, in Warwick, on Thursday, **January 21**, beginning at 8 a.m. You can find the registration form here:

<https://sites.google.com/site/riariase1/home>

Please scan your completed registration by **Tuesday** (January 12) to [riariase1@gmail.com](mailto:riariase1@gmail.com).

If you have any questions about this conference, please direct them to Ken Duva, at [riariase1@gmail.com](mailto:riariase1@gmail.com).

**18. Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to accept applications for Young Scholars Program**

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation will accept applications through April for the Young Scholars Program, a selective 5-year pre-college scholarship for high-performing middle-school students with financial need. The program provides individualized academic advising, financial support, and a pathway to the \$40,000-per-year college scholarship that the foundation offers. Each year the foundation selects up to 65 Young Scholars from a nationwide applicant pool, based on high academic ability and achievement, demonstrated financial need, drive and persistence, leadership, and the desire to help others. For more information, see: [www.jkcf.org/ysp](http://www.jkcf.org/ysp).

**19. Boghossian Memorial Trust offers college scholarships**

The Paul O. and Mary Boghossian Memorial Trust was established by Mr. Paul O. Boghossian, Jr., in memory of his parents, Paul and Mary Boghossian.

One of the purposes of this Trust is to grant scholarships to Rhode Island students for study at institutions of higher education beyond the secondary level who demonstrate financial need; academic capability; and potential to contribute to the United States and its form of government. All decisions pertaining to scholarship applications and award amount are made entirely at the discretion of a Scholarship Committee composed of five individuals independent of Bank of America, N.A., the Corporate Trustee, and also independent of the Boghossian family and Concordia Manufacturing Company, Inc.

Scholarship awards from the Trust are limited to Rhode Island students from any one of the following groups:

- Residents of Kent, Newport, or Washington Counties;
- Members or former members of the Kent County branch of the YMCA;
- Members or former members of the Pawtucket Boys and Girls Club;
- Members or descendants of Park Place Congregational Church, Pawtucket; or
- Persons or descendants of persons who are Armenian by national origin or descent.

For a copy of the application, please call Dian Quinn, at (617) 434-6454, or Perpetua Campbell, at (617) 434-2242. Applications are due **March 15**.

## **20. Forensic Outreach announces STEAM competition for students**

Forensic Outreach, which specializes in science-focused public engagement, is launching a worldwide STEAM competition for schools. in partnership with science education supplier, Ward's Science.

The competition, designed for students ages 11 to 16, consists of three downloadable mini-challenges — to be completed and submitted by a participating classroom through a virtual platform — that focus on chemistry, mathematics, and art history.

An FBI cryptanalyst, as well as experts in art conservation and history, have worked with Forensic Outreach to create the underlying curriculum and, in some cases, will also judge entries. The premise involves Leonardo da Vinci's real-life missing painting: "The Battle of Anghiari."

More information regarding the nature of this competition can be found here: [competition.forensicoutreach.com](http://competition.forensicoutreach.com). Schools can register there as well.

***RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:***

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>